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May 1964

PHOTOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION REPORT

ARALSK AIRFIELD, USSR

Declass Review, NIMA/DoD



CIA



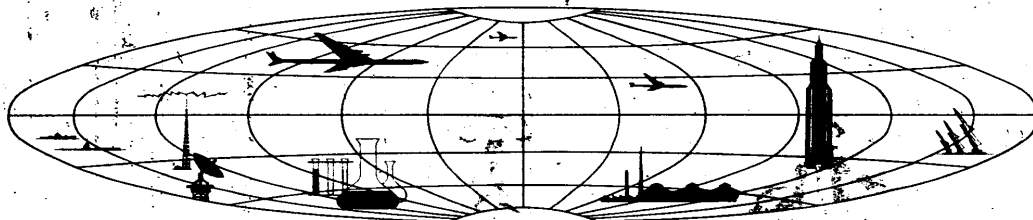
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ARALSK AIRFIELD, USSR

25X1D

SUMMARY

Aralsk Airfield is believed to be the air support base for Vozrozhdeniya Island on the basis of recorded flights from the airfield to the island. The airfield probably has other missions, also. A study of the airfield and its facilities reveals no definite biological

warfare (BW) indicators. Approximately nine nondescript buildings have been erected since the facility was first seen on TALENT photography of [REDACTED]. Small numbers of aircraft, ranging from 6 to 14, have been observed at the airfield.

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DESCRIPTION

Aralsk Airfield [REDACTED] coordinates 46-49N 61-37E) is located 3 nautical miles (nm) northwest of the town of Aralsk, USSR, to which it is connected by a dirt road (Figure 1). The Aktyubinsk-Tashkent single-track railroad passes close to the north end of the field. The airfield (Figure 2) consists of two intersecting unpaved runways and may

be fenced. The field was observed on poor-quality TALENT photography in [REDACTED] and has been observed several times since then on KEYHOLE photography, the best of which was taken in [REDACTED].

Airfield Facilities. Facilities at Aralsk Airfield comprise seven major buildings which are all medium-sized, one-story, barracks or

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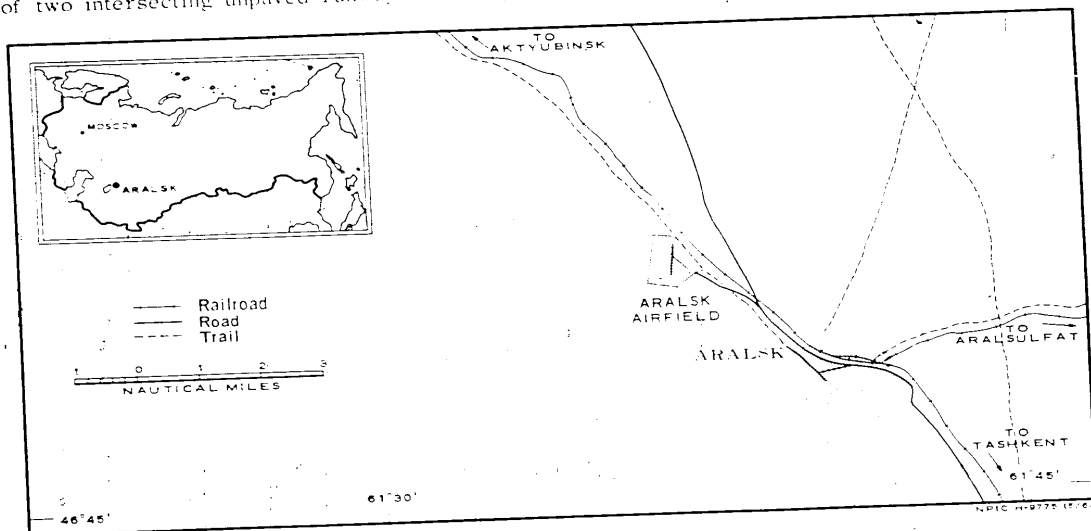


FIGURE 1. LOCATION MAP.

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warehouse-type structures, a number of smaller structures, two or more communications towers, and a probable POL facility (Figures 2 and 3). Dimensions of the major buildings are given in Figure 3. Buildings 2 and 3 are probably maintenance shops; the rest of the buildings are probably housing, storage, administrative, and communications units. Nine buildings have been constructed since [REDACTED] - two large, two medium, and five small structures.

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(Figure 4) shows four to six cylindrical tanks

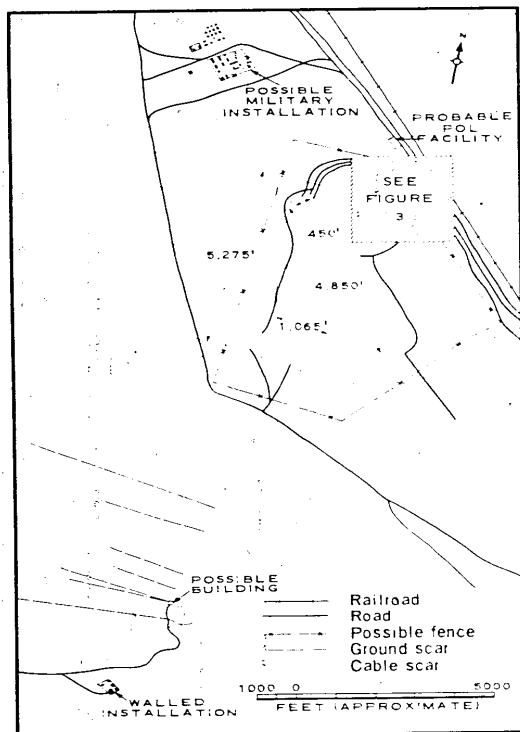


FIGURE 2. ARALSK AIRFIELD AND NEARBY INSTALLATIONS.

horizontally disposed on the surface of the ground east of building 1 (Figure 3). Subsequent KEYHOLE photography reveals no indications of these tanks so that it is likely that they have either been buried or moved. The wide variance in the sizes and shapes of these tanks suggests that they were designed to hold various quantities of several kinds of liquids or gases. Tanks of this type are not the usual tanks used to store POL products at an airfield, nor are they in a location suitable for this use.

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Aircraft Observed at Aralsk Airfield. Aircraft have been observed at Aralsk Airfield on both aerial and ground photography at various times between [REDACTED]. Dates of photography, number, and types of aircraft observed are shown in Table 1.

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Table 1. Number and Type of Soviet Aircraft Observed at Aralsk Airfield Between [REDACTED]

Date of Photography	Number and Type of Aircraft
[REDACTED]	10: 6 probable CAB, 4 unidentified single engine
[REDACTED]	14: 4 CAB, 3 COACH, 3 COLT, 3 CREEK, 1 HOUND
[REDACTED]	6: 1 possible CAB, 3 possible CRATE, 2 small unidentified
[REDACTED]	8: all unidentified straight wing
[REDACTED]	6: all unidentified because of snow cover

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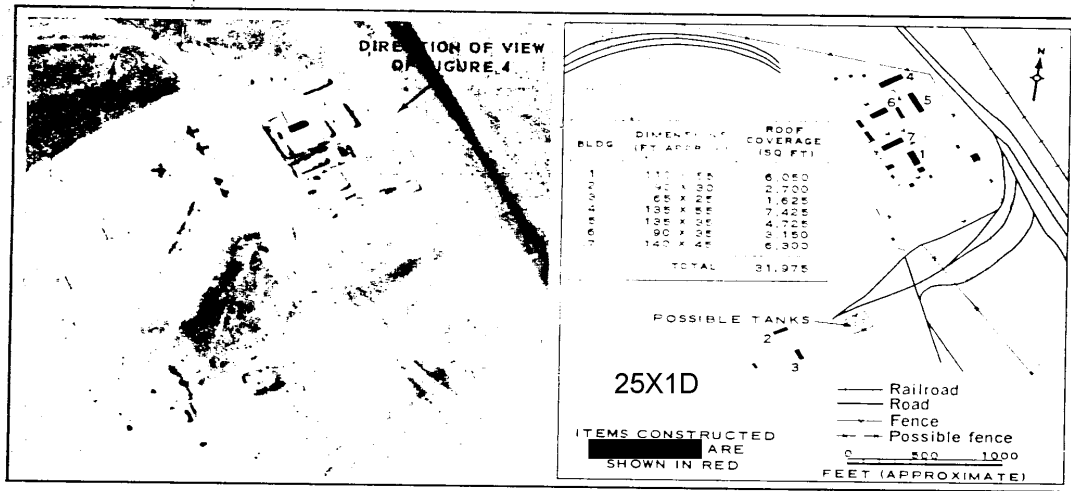
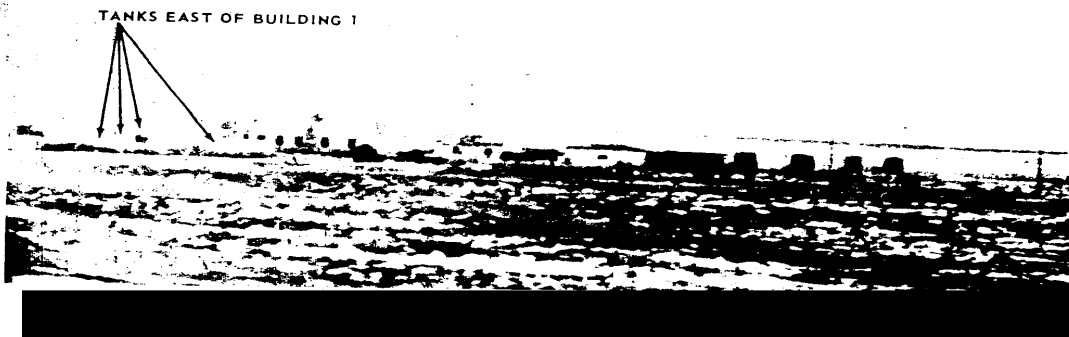


FIGURE 3. ARALSK AIRFIELD FACILITIES.

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photography, taken after a snowfall, indicates no effort to clear either planes or runways, suggesting that the field may be little used during the winter months.

Installations Near Aralsk Airfield.

facility that has been described as a possible military installation is situated about one nm north-northwest of the airfield. ² A similar facility is situated about one nm east of Aralsk beside the rail line that goes to Aralsulfat.

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It is possible that both installations are military in nature, but it is more probable that both are involved in the collection and initial processing of Glauber's salt (hydrated sodium sulphate), which is the principal industry of the area.

A small, walled installation is situated approximately 2.5 nm south of the airfield on a line with the center of the wider runway (Figure 2). The walled-in compound contains three large buildings and three or four small buildings; no change has been observed in this facility since [REDACTED]. A well-defined

set of three parallel cable scars extends from the south end of the runway most of the way to the walled installation, but apparently terminates at a possible building. A faint set of subparallel, straight ground scars intersect the triple cable scars at right angles. The function of the grid thus formed is difficult to determine. The three cable scars emanating from the runway may be part of a ground control approach system and the other scars may be the result of mineral exploration activities which have been extensive in the region.

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CONCLUSIONS

No support facilities having a definite BW connotation were observed at Aralsk Airfield. The tanks could be used to store fluids other than fuel. The storage-type buildings present have no visible distinctive characteristics that

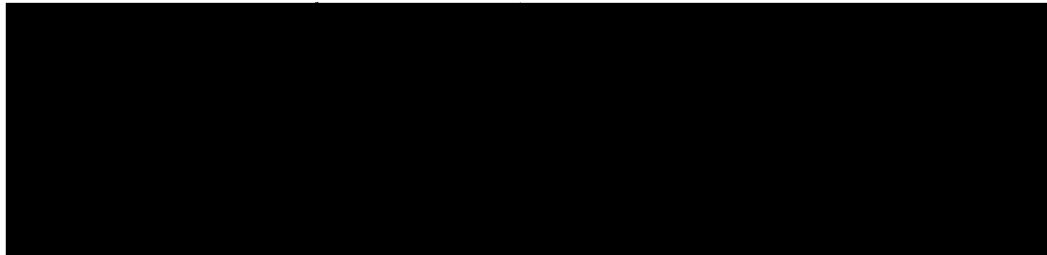
might indicate the nature of the stored materials. [REDACTED]

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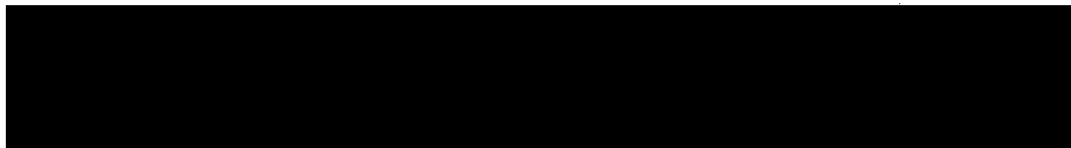
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REFERENCES

PHOTOGRAPHY



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REFERENCES (Continued)

MAPS OR CHARTS

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-- Downgrading Prohibited)

REQUIREMENT

CIA. C-S14-S1.269

NPIC PROJECT

N-442 '64

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